


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

Primary Applicant (Name and Address): Lakeland Communications Group, LLC 825 Innovation Avenue PO Box 40 Milltown, WI 54858	Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx . Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions. Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.		
	Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov		
	Date: December 1, 2021		
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>			
<p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>			
Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print) John K. Klatt	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Title President/ CEO </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Phone (715) 825-2171 </td> </tr> </table>	Title President/ CEO	Phone (715) 825-2171
Title President/ CEO	Phone (715) 825-2171		
Signature of Authorized Representative 	Date 3/14/2022		

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name Lakeland Communications Group, LLC	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$1,305,129		
Federal Employer Identification No. 39-0265610	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$1,305,129		
Contact Name and Title Robert Zuzek, Director of Business Development	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$2,610,258		
Telephone Number 715-825-5129	Project Name Johnstown Township of Polk County		
E-mail Address(es) robertz@lakelandteam.com	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH		
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last-Mile		
Grant Manager Contact Name	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number		
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Town of Johnstown 2181 20th Street Comstock, WI 54826 FEIN: 39-1704376 </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Polk County 100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 220 Balsam Lake, WI 54810 FEIN: 39-6005730 </td> </tr> </table>		Town of Johnstown 2181 20th Street Comstock, WI 54826 FEIN: 39-1704376	Polk County 100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 220 Balsam Lake, WI 54810 FEIN: 39-6005730
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Brief Project Description (2 sentences) This project proposes to build FTTH to unserved and underserved areas of Polk County WI based on the PSC eligibility map.			
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 10 Gbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 10 Gbps		
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 100 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 50 Mbps		
County or Counties served by this project Polk County	Community or Communities served by this project Johnstown Township		

<p>List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve</p> <p>The incumbent wireline provider is CenturyLink. There are no other providers serving the project area.</p>	
<p>Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in <u>Section 1.4</u> of the application instruction? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes, Polk County is certified as Broadband Forward! and Telecommuter Forward!</p>
<p>For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>12 Businesses</p>	<p>For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>338 residential locations</p>
<p>Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i>?</p> <p>There are no businesses within the unserved areas identified on the PSC broadband map.</p>	<p>Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i>?</p> <p>2 are within the unserved areas identified on the PSC broadband map, but many residents in areas identified as underserved have reported service levels below the unserved definition.</p>
<p>For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) Yes, Lifeline is currently available in all areas where Lakeland has received ETC status.</p>	<p>Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes, Lakeland started participating in EBB from the start of the program which has transitioned to ACP</p>	<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) Yes</p>	

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
Lakeland Communications Group, LLC	Johnstown Township of Polk County

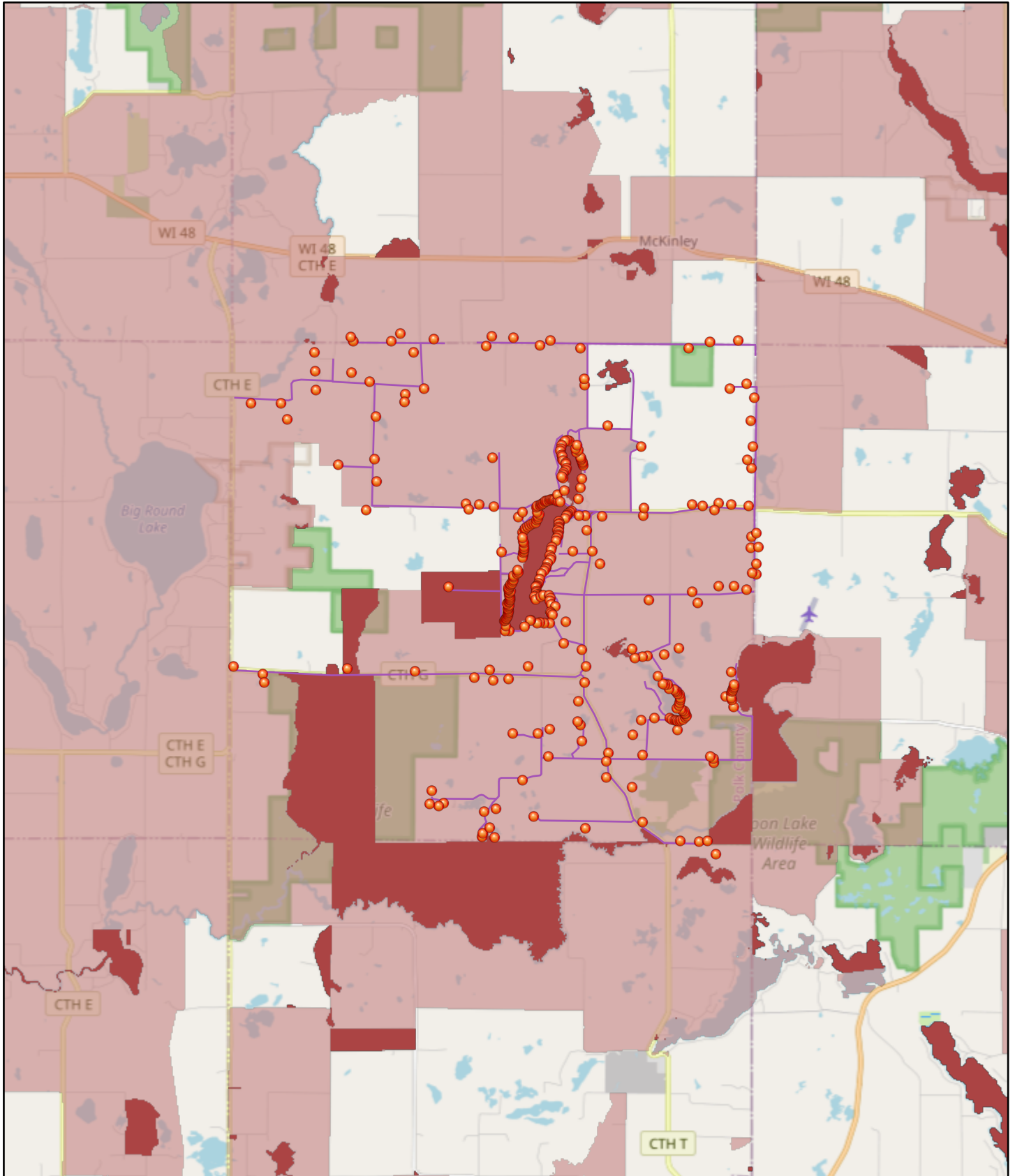
Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 926,133.00	\$ 926,133.00	\$ 1,852,266.00
2	Equipment	\$ 378,996.00	\$ 378,996.00	\$ 757,992.00
3	Supplies			\$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)			\$ -
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			\$ -
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 1,305,129.00	\$ 1,305,129.00	\$ 2,610,258.00
				50.0% match requested

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Lakeland Communications	Applicant	Cash	\$ 1,088,266.90
2	Johnstown Township	Partner	Cash	\$ 16,862.10
3	Polk County	Partner	Cash	\$ 200,000.00
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 1,305,129.00

ArcGIS Web Map



3/12/2022, 2:43:12 PM

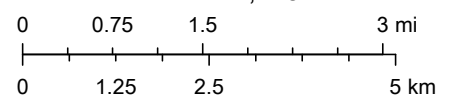
1:144,448

0 or 1 Fixed Internet Options for 25+ Mbps Down / 3+ Mbps Up

0 Fixed Internet Options for 5+ Mbps Down / 0.6+ Mbps Up

Johnstown Locations_0

Johnstown Route Miles_0



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3.2 Mandatory application requirements

3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information

- a. The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.

Lakeland Communications Group, LLC.
P.O. Box 40
825 Innovation Ave.,
Milltown, WI 54858

Robert Zuzek, Director of Business Development
715-825-5129
robertz@lakelandteam.com

Crystal Morley, Controller
715-825-5105
crystalm@lakelandteam.com

- b. If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.

Town of Johnstown
2181 20th Street
Comstock, WI 54826
FEIN: 39-1704376

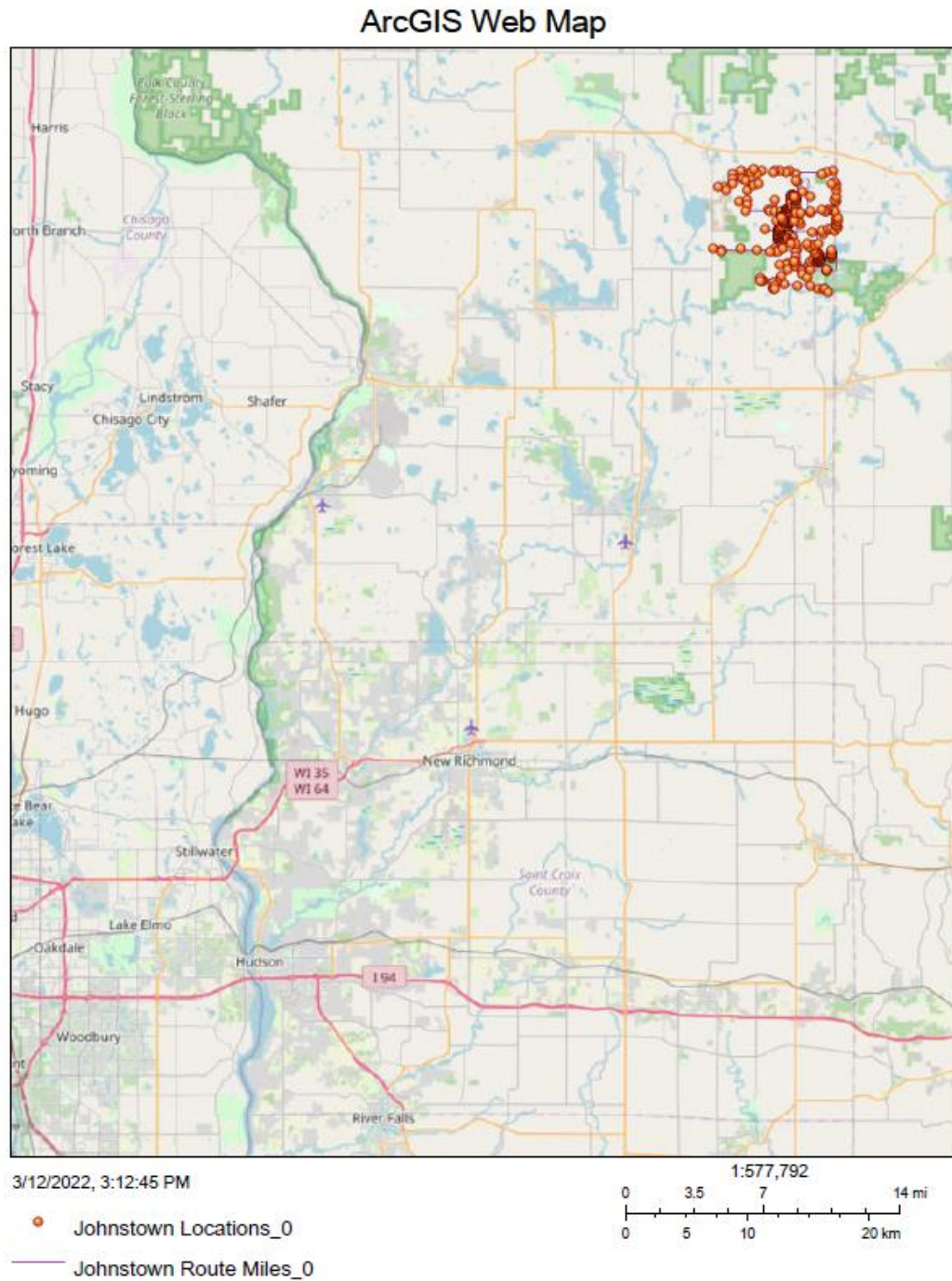
Polk County
100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 220
Balsam Lake, WI 54810
715-485-9226
FEIN: 39-6005730

- c. The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).

Lakeland Communications Group LLC. Is an ILEC and CLEC telecommunications utility doing business in Polk County WI since 1908. Lakeland Communications Group LLC. is assigned utility #3230 with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

3.2.2 Description of the project

- a. A static map and description of the area of the State that will be affected by the proposed project.



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Wisconsin Broadband Office, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin | Connected Nation, DEED | Source: U.S. Census Bureau | The TIGER/Line shapefile products are not copyrighted, however Web AppBuilder for ArcGIS

- b. If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service that is available in the proposed project area.

There are 2 census blocks in the project area that appear served on the WI PSC Broadband Map. Because the area is extremely rural census blocks are very large. Both census blocks that appear served show Lakeland Communications as a provider. Lakeland Communications correctly reported the blocks because there are locations in an adjacent area that fall in the edges of the blocks. The locations in this application are not servicable by Lakeland Communications today and all meet the defintion of either unserved or underserved.

- c. An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access. Include information about the:
- Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.
 - 338 total locations
 - 2 locations unserved
 - 336 locations underserved
 - 77% expected connections
 - Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.
 - 12 total business
 - 80% expected connections
 - Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.

There are a few smaller lakes in the project area, with many of the properties located on those lakes being owned by people who are not permanent residents of the area. With the advent of the pandemic and the shift towards telecommuting and online education, we saw a dramatic increase in economic and broadband demand fueled by these seasonal residents. In addition to the seasonal residents spending more time in our area, we have also noticed a trend of seasonal residents making these rural seasonal locations their permanent home. Broadband access is necessary to realize the economic impact that seasonal locations have in our area.

- Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.

Lakeland will offer broadband service starting at 100Mbps/50Mbps residential and all the way up to 10Gbps symmetrical for business.

- d. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the “last mile,” “middle mile,” or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.

The primary focus of this project is to build “last mile” infrastructure that will provide 10Gbps, 100% fiber broadband connectivity to unserved and underserved businesses and residents throughout the project area.

This proposed broadband expansion further expands our “last mile” fiber services deeper into unserved/underserved areas of Polk County. Polk County had completed an in-depth study to determine the broadband coverage of the County. This specific project area is one of the largest unserved/underserved area of the county. (See attached map, exhibit 3)

- e. **A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether the speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.**

If awarded Lakeland will expand our current fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network deploying 10Gbps fiber network technology. Lakeland will offer broadband service starting at 100Mbps/50Mbps residential and all the way up to 10Gbps symmetrical for business. This design allows a high level of flexibility and ensures Lakeland will have a future-ready network. Lakeland’s network policy is to never exceed 70% utilization of any of our network elements. In other words, if all users on a piece of equipment utilized their highest usage at the same time, they would all experience no less than their subscribed tier of service.

Lakeland builds 100% buried fiber construction from the internet access point to the consumer location. Buried facility is well protected & extremely reliable even in the most challenging weather conditions of northern Wisconsin.

- f. **For middle mile projects: N/A**

- g. **A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. The project period is up to 24 months.**

If awarded this grant, Lakeland plans to construct the entire project as soon as possible to get internet connectivity to rural residents in the shortest timeframe possible. There are some extenuating circumstances created by supply chain issues and delays. Lakeland estimates the below schedule to be conservative, but Lakeland will accelerate this schedule wherever or when possible.

Construction season 2022 (Order date-Nov 2022) 50% of mainline installed, 25% of locations could be connected by season end.

Construction season 2023 (May-Nov 2023) completion of mainline installation, all remaining locations can be connected by season end.

3.2.3 Itemized Budget (all amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar)

- a. In addition to the Summary of Project Budget that is included as page 3, applicants should include a price list or quote for any equipment the applicant intends to purchase, including capital expenditures. The application should also indicate whether any facilities involved would be owned, rented, or leased.

Equipment to be purchased or requisitioned from inventory as part of the project include:

Fiber & Markers	\$ 389,449
Handholes & Cones	\$ 172,930
Splice Cases	\$ 122,613
<u>Electronics</u>	<u>\$ 73,000</u>
Total	\$ 757,992

All construction and equipment purchased as part of this project will be owned by Lakeland Communications.

- b. The application must show that the grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers. For purposes of this grant program, subsidize means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

Grant funds will not subsidize operating expenses or otherwise be used for any purpose outside of the scope of the proposed project.

- c. The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas covered by the application.

The grant, if awarded, will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved project area.

3.2.4 Priority factors supporting the application

- a. **Matching funds.** A description of the matching funds the applicant will invest in the proposed project, if any. For each element, indicate the type of match (cash, salary expense, or in-kind contribution). If the application is submitted by a partnership, identify the partner responsible for providing each element of the proposed matching funds. *Note: The requirement for this information is satisfied via inclusion of the completed Funding Statement as page 4 of the application.*

Lakeland has entered into a public-private partnership with the Town of Johnstown substantiated by approved Town board minutes.

The Town of Johnstown has committed 30% of their assigned ARPA funds (\$16,862.10) towards the total project costs, if Lakeland is awarded a grant in the FY2022 cycle.

The Township has also committed to assisting Lakeland with in-kind support and the approval of Lakeland working within their road right-of-ways. The Town has also pledged to work closely with Lakeland on any road construction or

maintenance projects.

Polk County has also offered 15% of total grant costs or up to \$200,000 matching funds if Lakeland successfully attains a grant through the PSC Broadband Grant program.

Lakeland will fund all remaining mainline project costs associated to this grant project area.

- If available, provide documentation to support an offer of matching funds (minutes of a town board meeting, a letter from a prospective customer or local government official, etc.).

Please see attached letters of support from the Town of Johnstown (Letters of support, (exhibit 1)

- Matching funds contributions must be a firm commitment of funding to the project. Contributions that vary based on the number of actual sales, customer contributions, or other criteria will not be given weight. Matching contributions do not vary based on the number of actual sales, customer contributions, or other criteria.

b. **Public-private partnerships.** If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement. If the partnership has not been reduced to a written agreement, provide a short description of the management role, financial commitment, or other contribution to the project for each participating partner.

- In scoring this element, information regarding active engagement of diverse communities in the planning, permitting, or marketing of the project will be given weight as well.

Details of our public-private partnership are documented in the attached letter of support (exhibit 1)

The Township and Polk County fully support the project and both know that the grant is the only way to address the vast unserved/underserved area throughout their respective township.

Lakeland has built a long and lasting relationship with Polk County as we have rolled out our FTTH network deeper within the county. Lakeland has been the only provider within the county who has upgraded 100% of its incumbent territory to a 100% FTTH network.

Because of Lakeland's fiber broadband deployment, the county promotes Lakeland's efforts as it assists the counties economic development efforts. Lakeland is the county's broadband provider for internet connectivity.

The County brings awareness to affordability programs. They also work to bring awareness to how broadband can enhance lives through services such as telemedicine, working from home, and services that the University of

Wisconsin-Extension provides.

c. **Existing broadband service.** A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The degree to which the proposed project avoids duplicating existing broadband infrastructure.

Lakeland is proposing to deploy a FTTH network in the project area. There are currently no FTTH services available today, as the only existing infrastructure is copper based DSL provided by Century Link.

- The application of a wireless broadband service provider proposing significant overlap with existing broadband service in addition to service to an unserved area will not be given priority consideration.

There is not fixed wireless internet available in the project area.

- Provide a list of all landline broadband service providers (DSL, cable or fiber to the home) and fixed wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed broadband project.

The only wireline broadband provider in this area is CenturyLink. They have very limited access and speeds available in the area provided by an outdated DSL network. Some locations have no internet availability at all.

- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing landline and fixed wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.

It is unknown.

- Provide a list of mobile wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed project.

There are 3 wireless mobile broadband providers present that are providing less than reliable service in the proposed project area.

- T-Mobile
- AT&T
- Verizon

- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing mobile wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers. (The presence of existing mobile wireless providers does not contribute to or affect the evaluation of existing broadband service in the project area for purposes of priority consideration, but provides a more complete picture of the broadband options available to residents.)

It is unknown how many residents of this project area subscribe to mobile wireless services.

- For middle mile projects, describe the unserved and underserved areas that the middle mile route will transit. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account: N/A
- The number of unserved and underserved service locations that could potentially connect through the proposed middle mile route. N/A

- The degree to which the middle mile route will reduce the cost of extending fiber to the premises broadband service to business and residential service locations in an unserved or underserved area. N/A
- The degree to which the proposed middle mile route avoids duplicating existing and planned fiber to the premises broadband infrastructure. N/A

- d. **Project impact.** A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be served by the proposed project. Indicate the number of anticipated residential and business customers in the project area, if known. Explain the speed and quality of internet service that will be available. Include information about the range of packages available for purchase. Provide details on any low-income access programs and steps the project will take to support adoption.

Lakeland believes this project is exactly what the Wisconsin legislature had in mind when this program was developed. This Project helps accomplish the goal of the Wisconsin Broadband Plan - which states that the Broadband Plan's overarching goal is for "Every Wisconsinite to have affordable access to broadband service, if they so choose, by January 1, 2025."

This specific area of Polk County has been deemed underserved by the "Polk County Broadband Snapshot" map which was completed on December 9th, 2021 by the County's 3rd party consultant (exhibit 3). This project area covers a large geographical area of Polk County and encompasses the entire Township of Johnstown. This area is primarily made up of lower density residents living on larger lots, hobby farms or traditional farms. Without a Broadband Grant this unserved/underserved area may not be expanded into for years and would remain isolated from fiber broadband services.

It is important to note that this township lies near the edge of a rapidly developing market expanding out of the Twin Cities metro area of eastern Minnesota. We are already seeing the effects of urban migration to our rural areas as homeowners look for more reasonable home prices, or the slower pace of life that can be found in northwest Wisconsin. With this potential for growth in mind, Lakeland has engineered its fiber design for expected residential and business growth in this project area.

The network would pass approximately 338 unserved/underserved residential locations. This project would also serve approximately 12 business in the area.

Standard residential packages:

100/50 Mbps
250/100 Mbps
500/100 Mbps
1 Gig/200 Mbps

Full list of products and services available at www.lakeland.ws

All packages include Wi-Fi electronics and managed Wi-Fi, and a personalized Wi-Fi app. Premium managed Wi-Fi services are available which include many additional features such as home network security and enhanced parental controls, etc. Business packages are all symmetrical and range from 100 Mbps to 10 Gbps.

Lakeland takes every opportunity to extend affordability and low-income options to consumers. We have provided Lifeline and Tribal Linkup in eligible areas since the inception of the programs. In addition to Lifeline and Tribal Linkup we participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program. We participate in the Department of Public Instruction's CESA Purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge. During the recent pandemic we set up hotspots around our communities for free use of Wi-Fi for anyone who was in need. We also took the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. Lakeland was only one of a few providers to participate in EBB from the inception of the program, when program participation was not required. We have dedicated resources to create access to these invaluable programs.

- e. **Scalability.** A description of how the proposed project could expand or improve the broadband service it delivers, while maintaining the quality of its broadband service. This description should include specific projected increases in the following parameters that are known at the time of the application:

This proposed project will be built with existing homes and businesses in mind but is engineered and designed for significant anticipated growth.

- **The number of users.**
This project proposes to pass approximately 350 locations. The project area is designated as an expected area of growth within the county. Lakeland's grant application will allow for enough fiber count throughout the proposed project area to support growth in and around the area.
- **The number of network nodes.**
1
- **The number of services provided.**
Lakeland will provide 100% fiber highspeed data and switched digital voice service throughout the market. Lakeland is progressive in offering new and emerging products and services that compliment broadband and voice services. More information about these services can be found at www.lakeland.ws
- **The geographic area served by the project.**
This project area serves the Township of Johnstown in Polk County, Wisconsin. According to both the PSC map and the attached Polk County Broadband Snapshot map, this area is primarily underserved with a few locations showing unserved. This project area covers portions of the Luck School District, Unity School District and

Turtle Lake School District. Please see map that references the geographic area and why broadband investment is critical to this project area (3.2.2.a)

- The number of aggregation points in middle mile project.
N/A

- f. **Economic development.** A description of how the proposed project will promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region. This description may be supplemented with a letter from one or more persons discussing the potential economic impact the project could have for that individual or business. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

Through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) statewide assessment of the economic impact of COVID-19, they came to three recommendations and one of their recommendations was on Fixed Broadband: “The pandemic has highlighted the digital divide in our state. Education, e-commerce, remote-working, and even contact with the government depends on access to computers and high-speed internet.”

In a recent Polk County meeting following the results of Wisconsin’s PSC ARPA Broadband Grant round, the Polk County Economic Development Executive Director, Terry Hauer, relayed that the Health Care Providers in the County have expressed their disappointment regarding the results of the grant round, due to the lack of consistent and reliable broadband throughout the County to support telemedicine and employment in telemedicine roles.

“In conversations with our major healthcare providers throughout Polk County, they are all much more heavily reliant on the need for adequate broadband to handle the new necessity of telehealth and online meetings. Equally important to the actual delivery of care, is the need to attract those individuals to Polk County in order to fill the many roles needed throughout the healthcare system. In a recent conversation with a head HR Director for our [Polk County’s] biggest healthcare provider, they had 58 positions to fill if they could just attract the right candidates for those jobs. One of the hurdles to workforce attraction this healthcare provider acknowledged is the need for broadband access to their homes. Having adequate broadband is a key component to being able to attract healthcare workers to our area who provide the critical care our residents need.” -Terry Hauer, Polk County Economic Development Executive Director.

- A discussion of potential economic impact the project could have for an individual business located in the project area.

Though there is less density of businesses in this specific section of Polk County, it goes without saying that the businesses that are present are handicapped due to the lack of

high-speed fiber broadband services. It is proven that to compete in today's business environment, robust broadband services are essential for businesses to be competitive, to grow, and to remain a viable into the future.

In a broadband study by a neighboring county, results show:

Among business respondents, 88 percent indicated the Internet is important to the success of their business.

For the businesses that responded, 73 percent reported they need employees to be able to work from home either part-time or full-time.

- **An explanation of how an improved download and upload transmission speed could better support a specific business in the project area.**

In this proposed project area one of the businesses is a church. During the pandemic the parish was not able to extend digital options to view services available from other churches in areas with broadband. In such an unprecedented time of stress, grief and hardship the congregation members were unable to access church services due to the lack of broadband at the church itself. In addition, churches have all learned a lot from the experience of the pandemic and online church resources will be a trend that will continue into the future with broadband access being the vital resource to make it happen.

- **An explanation of the likely impact improved broadband service could have on residential property values, supported by local sales data if available.**

Lakeland has worked closely with local Polk County real estate teams to keep them abreast of broadband expansion in this market. The real estate community knows that homes without broadband services, especially over the past 2 years, have become a real challenge to sell. Real Estate professionals are learning that they need to know if highspeed internet is available early in their home search because their clients are demanding it, in some cases even before they will look at a property.

Through many studies that have been published there is significant impact on the value of a home with FTTH service available and they have mentioned an increase of 3.1% up to 10%.

Impact on home prices

“Meanwhile, broadband has become a high priority for folks working from home, going to school online, and staying connected with family and friends. A high-speed connection can add 10% or more to the price of a home, according to realtors, and many buyers won't even consider a property without it.” -Rick Barrett, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

"It's still a huge issue in my area," said state Rep. Tony Kurtz, a Republican from Wonewoc in Juneau County. "If you talk to the realtors, they're going to tell you that home values are tied to internet speeds."

- The average market price for homes having FTTH access was 8.6% higher than homes without FTTH access.
- The most recent appraised values of homes having FTTH access were 4.5% higher, on average, than homes without FTTH access
- Homes with fiber have a price that is 3.1% greater than similar homes without fiber

(Source: Molnar, Savage, and Sicker, 2015, Reevaluating the Broadband Bonus: Evidence from Neighborhood Access to Fiber and United States Housing Prices &

[FTTH gives homeowners a raise | Lightwave \(lightwaveonline.com\)](#) and the Fiber to the Home Council)

- **A demonstration of how improved broadband service to a residential portion of the project could benefit a telecommuting population.**

This market lies approximately one hour north and east of the Minneapolis/St. Paul twin cities. When COVID-19 started, a large number of individuals in the area started to work from home and have remained working from home. Because of the limited broadband speeds available in this project area, this has been a challenge for the telecommuter. Families have to scramble to find a combination of broadband solutions that can cost them even more. Telecommuters in this area have had to make tough decisions regarding who is going to use the internet and for how long. This is unacceptable in today's digital environment as often times there can be more than one telecommuter in a home.

The Lakeland proposed FTTH 100% fiber service will solve any telecommuter challenges and concerns by providing up to 10GBPS/10GBPS speeds to consumers. The consumers will also receive at no charge, a Wi-Fi wireless router with their broadband service. This Wi-Fi service is managed by Lakeland with technology and security updates being provided as they are available.

- **A demonstration of how the speeds and service being offered by the project fits with current and future economic needs of the community and local businesses.**

Lakeland's service offering of up to 10Gbps symmetrical speeds will meet and exceed current and future economic needs. E-commerce is not even possible in the broadband landscape present in the township today. Broadband availability will allow the township to realize business development opportunities never before available.

- g. **Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas.** A description of whether the proposed project will or will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area.

We are not anticipating any negative impact on adjacent service areas.

3.2.5 Other information supporting the application

a. A description of applicant's history or experience constructing broadband communications facilities in the State and elsewhere.

***If applicable, an applicant must comment upon the status of all prior broadband expansion grant projects, including the type of broadband technology used, the facility route actually built or installed, the number of residential and business customers actually connected, and other relevant details of the prior project(s).**

Lakeland Communications was formed when two adjacent independent ILEC's, Luck Telephone Company and Milltown Mutual Telephone Company merged in 1996 in response to the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Both companies were founded in 1908. In the early 2000's Lakeland started a CLEC in neighboring communities and now serves a large portion of Polk County Wisconsin. Throughout our more than 110-year history Lakeland has engineered, designed, planned, financed, and executed countless outside plant builds. Over the most recent decades those builds have been 100% fiber construction. In both the ILEC and CLEC Lakeland is focused on designing all-fiber networks to serve every location with capacity and scalability for almost limitless speed potential as well as population growth.

The Lakeland Communications staff have significant experience with all technologies, services, and equipment vendors that Lakeland will be deploying as part of this network expansion. The staff at Lakeland have an average of 17 years of service with Lakeland Communications in the telecommunications industry. All aspects of the network expansion will fit within our existing network management and provisioning processes. The size and scope of this project is comparable to other similar projects Lakeland has scheduled and executed with current staffing and resources.

Through the aid of the Wisconsin PSC Broadband Grant Program, Lakeland has been able to expand its network deeper into Polk County. Lakeland has successfully served the entire Town of Eureka in Polk County that was previously without access to broadband services. The project was spread over two grant rounds in a two-phase project, Eureka Phase I and Eureka Phase II. The grants initially built past 216 locations by the end of 2020. Lakeland continued to build to an additional 278 locations to ensure that all locations in the township could access high-speed broadband. All locations are now eligible for FTTH 100% fiber and telephone services provided by Lakeland Communications Group, LLC.

***An applicant may also comment on broadband construction projects undertaken in prior years that were not funded in part by the Broadband Expansion Grant program.**

The most recent projects include the FTTH projects in our incumbent exchanges which commenced in 2008. Participation in the Wisconsin PSC Broadband Grant from 2018-

2021, RDOF builds commenced in 2021 in addition to multiple edge builds during that time frame.

Since completion of the Town of Eureka fiber build, Lakeland participated in the RDOF reverse auction and was awarded multiple areas. In 2021, Lakeland built past approximately 1314 added locations.

b. A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.

The broadband network that is being proposed under this grant application is (FTTH) architecture. There is no existing FTTH infrastructure in this project area.

c. A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project.

This may include information such as the number of years the company has been in operation, documentation of successful completion of similar infrastructure projects, evidence that sufficient funds are available to cover project expenditure and match, customer turn-over rates, and credit rating.

Throughout our more than 110-year history Lakeland has engineered, designed, planned, financed, and executed countless outside plant builds. The staff at Lakeland have an average of 17 years of service with Lakeland Communications in the telecommunications industry. Through the past 15 years all Lakeland's network builds have been 100% fiber construction. In both the ILEC and CLEC Lakeland has focused on designing FTTH networks to serve every location with capacity and scalability for almost limitless speed potential as well as population growth.

Lakeland committed to fiber early on, before many peers, because Lakeland saw it as the technology of the future. Lakeland has been building fiber into its networks for more than 35 years. Lakeland has invested its own capital as well as sought out community partnerships and broadband expansion grant opportunities.

In 2018, with the help of a WI PSC Grant Lakeland commenced a FTTH build in the Town of Eureka Township with the intent to cover the entire Township. The project has now been completed, and the entire township has been built with fiber-optic facility. Lakeland participated in the FCC RDOF auction, which sought to bring broadband services to areas that did not currently have internet service speeds of 25/3mbps available.

From 2018 to 2021, Lakeland has installed 216 miles of mainline fiber outside of its incumbent exchange.

Lakeland continues to seek opportunities to expand fiber broadband to communities of need, to close the digital divide that exists in Polk County and beyond.

- d. For middle mile projects, state the terms under which the applicant will make its middle mile fiber resource available to last mile providers. Without disclosing project-specific or customer-specific negotiated rates for service or access, state whether access to the middle mile fiber resource will be offered to last mile providers at a rate that is reasonable and common to the industry. Describe any restrictions or limits that may limit the availability or interconnection with the middle mile route.

N/A

- e. For middle mile routes, state the amount of fiber capacity, by number of fiber strands in a cable, that the applicant has been reserved for public use. Describe any commitment or tentative discussion indicating the local government or State agency that might use those fiber strands, and for what purpose. Describe any restrictions or limits that may limit the public use (e.g. a possible use conflicts with an existing program covering the same subject matter). N/A

- f. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those services.

Dave Dobosenski, the President/CEO of St. Croix Regional Medical Center has provided us a supporting letter and summarized the challenges of the lack of broadband services in greater Polk County:

"As a health care provider, the lack of community broadband has had a negative impact to patient care and the overall health of our communities we serve during the pandemic. The inability to provide key services remotely like telehealth visits and digital monitoring creates a void in care for those who are in need. We have treated many patients who have delayed their care and when they finally presented, had significantly more complex health issues." (See attached letter of support, exhibit 5)

- g. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.

- Specific information on the likely number of students that will benefit from improved access to educational opportunities from home would be useful.

The project area impacts three school districts. The students living in this project area face considerable challenges in being able to access their online learning daily because of the limited access to adequate broadband speed. When the Lakeland FTTH network is completed all of the students will have access to 100% fiber speeds needed to participate in online learning.

There are several online sources of education provided by public schools, colleges, and other continuing education resources. Any of the online schooling that is done is dramatically affected when living in an underserved broadband market. The residents

in the proposed project area will have the ability to access their online schooling more efficiently because they will have the fiber speeds that are required.

- **Specific information regarding educational programs that are currently available for students in the project area would be useful.**

The school districts in the proposed project area have access to their curriculum online and the ability for students' parents to access their online grading and to communicate directly with their instructors through streaming, or chat.

Also, the school districts can revert to online learning at any time for reasons such as a winter storm day or other reasons. In this project area, students with the FTTH network will have access to the 100% fiber internet speeds needed for quality distance learning.

h. A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or county in support of the grant application that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, including but not limited to:

- **The contribution of funds, easements or permissions to use publicly-owned real estate, construction materials, or other items of value to the grant project.**

Lakeland has entered into an agreement, substantiated by approved board minutes of the townships, with the Town of Johnstown. The Township has committed 30% of their designated ARPA funding which totals \$16,862.10.

Polk County has also offered to contribute 15% of total grant costs up to \$200,000 in matching funds if Lakeland successfully attains a grant through the WI PSC Broadband Grant program.

- **The contribution of in-kind assistance to the grant project in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining use permits and permissions.**

The Township is working with Lakeland to reduce barriers and costs by eliminating permitting fees. This is a substantial in-kind contribution. (See attached letter of support, exhibit 1)

Polk County is also allowing access to their road right-of-ways throughout the proposed project area. The permitting has been reduced to a per project filing. This is a substantial in-kind contribution.

- **The contribution of other items of benefit to the grant project, such as public outreach and education, vehicles, water, etc.**

Polk County is working on setting up ongoing education programs for all interested parties pertaining to broadband services and ACP discounted programs that can benefit the citizens throughout Polk County.

- **Certification as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community.**

Polk County has been a leader in Wisconsin by achieving both the Broadband Forward! And Telecommuter Forward! designations. These resolutions seek to reduce the financial and administrative burdens of building broadband facilities. Please see attached Broadband Forward! and Telecommuter Forward! certifications (exhibits 9 & 10)

- **Letters and messages in support of the application submitted by prospective customers, local government officials, and other interested persons.**

Letters of support and additional documents are attached to this grant proposal.

i. Any other equitable factor that the applicant desires to discuss, including one or more of the factors in Wis. Stat. § 196.03(6) that the applicant believes its project would advance. In discussing this element, the following information may be useful:

- **Technical support and training materials that the applicant intends to provide.**

Lakeland has created a landing page for educational information on their website www.lakeland.ws. This information is provided through videos, or whitepapers and they provide educational resources and frequently asked questions for broadband services. Materials touch on topics such as broadband speeds a customer may need at their home or business or how to use their smart phone app that can assist them with Wi-Fi parental controls and home network security tools.

Once the consumer has applied for their services, Lakeland will review the order with the pending customer and discuss the steps of the installation. Once services are installed, a 24-hour technical support line is available to customers.

Lakeland is also proud to offer two fully staffed local offices open to walk-in traffic along with local live answering representatives.

- **Information that the applicant intends to use to promote better broadband adoption and use.**

Prior to and immediately following the construction of mainline fiber in broadband expansion areas, Lakeland representatives canvas the expansion territory, visiting each home to discuss the project, provide educational materials, and answer any questions residents may have. Follow-up materials are also provided to residents throughout the project via personal interactions, direct mail, or telephone conversations.

Lakeland has added a number of consumer tools and educational pieces on its website and through its social media sites to better inform customers of the benefits

of fiber broadband services. Lakeland also continues to provide documentation on changes in technologies that require broadband services only available on fiber.

Lakeland provides community outreach events and customer engagement opportunities. Our staff participates in a variety of community events throughout the year, which provides a great platform for in-person customer interactions. We feel that this is another area that significantly separates us from our competitors. All of these factors significantly contribute to broadband adoption.

- **A description of a program or outreach to provide assistance to individuals of low income.**

Lakeland supports the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program on an ongoing basis. We have an ACP resource page on our website, that details frequently asked questions regarding ACP. In addition, our FAQ page links directly to the ACP outreach page.

Lakeland will also be working closely with Polk County who will be investing in additional outreach supporting broadband adoption and assistance to individuals of low income.

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6. Osceola Medical Center – Jesse Wulf, Information Services
7. Representative David Armstrong – 75th Assembly District
8. WSTA – Bill Esbeck, Executive Director
9. Broadband Forward! Certification
10. Telecommuter Forward! Certification



Town of Johnstown

Polk County, WI

Deanne Moravitz, Clerk

715.497.3043

ddmorv@gmail.com

<https://townofjohnstownwi.com/>

RE: Lakeland Communications Group, LLC and Town of Johnstown Private-Public Partnership for the Broadband Expansion Grant into the Township.

The Town of Johnstown Board of Supervisors fully supports the partnership with Lakeland Communications Group LLC application for the Public Service Commission (PSC) Broadband Expansion Grant.

The Town of Johnstown has a population base of approximately 520 residences. Our population base has a wide variety of occupations that require improved broadband services. The inadequacy of our existing wire-based infrastructure in our rural area was fully realized in the past two years with the shift towards home-based employment, education and businesses. The current provider in our area has indicated that they will not be expanding their fiber optic service to cover the underserved areas of our township. Because of these concerns, and our obligation to the businesses and residents of our community to see they have the viable broadband services, we look to partner with Lakeland on expanding 100% fiber broadband services through our community.

The proposed construction in the eligible grant areas within the Town of Johnstown would provide fiber optic service to approximately 330 homes and businesses.

The Town of Johnstown passed a motion at our March 8th 2022 board meeting to partner with and contribute 30% of the project costs to expand fiber network in the Town of Johnstown, up to \$16,862.10 contingent upon Lakeland Communications Group, LLC being awarded the PSC Broadband Expansion Grant and fulfilling the installation within our town, as described below.

Within this partnership the township also pledges to assist in the project by:

- Providing in-kind assistance to the Project which may be in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from local government;
- Granting permission on and across Town property to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliances with all existing rules and regulations;
- Providing administrative support and resources as may be agreed upon, in support of the Project;
- Providing community education and outreach regarding the expansion of broadband access to residences and businesses within the scope of the Project; and
- Recognize the Broadband Grant Expansion Project is a priority and is consistent with any internal planning document adopted by the Town's governing committees.

The Town of Johnstown Board of Supervisors encourages the Public Service Commission to give serious consideration of this grant application, which is being submitted by Lakeland Communications Group, LLC.

Sincerely,

Mike Anderson, Chairman

Joe Zaspel, Supervisor

Dan Lowe, Supervisor

Attested by Deanne Moravitz, Clerk

Deanne Moravitz, Clerk Date 3/10/22



Vince Netherland, County Administrator
100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 220
Balsam Lake, WI 54810
715-485-9286
vince.netherland@polkcountywi.gov

March 11, 2022

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR PSC BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT

To Chairperson Rebecca Valcq:

Polk County Government fully supports the project proposal and application to the Public Service Commission submitted by Lakeland Communications Group, LLC to improve broadband internet service in the area of Johnstown Township. Polk County is committed to partnering with Lakeland Communications Group, LLC in this endeavor to ensure that more of our citizens, students, businesses, and visitors have improved internet access.

To support the expansion of Broadband in Polk County, the County Board of Supervisors has recently passed a resolution that creates a matching grant of funds for any PSC-approved Broadband Expansion Grant project affecting Polk County. Specifically, Polk County is committed to using recently awarded ARPA funds to match up to 15% of the total project cost up to \$200,000 per project.

The County has designated the expansion of Broadband throughout our County as one its top priorities and is committing funds and staff to ensure this happens. In addition to the matching funds mentioned above, Polk County has also been working with various organizations, including WEDC, Polk County EDC, UW Extension, WCWRPC, PSC Broadband Office, and Momentum West to develop communication strategies to enhance broadband adoption, diversity, and education.

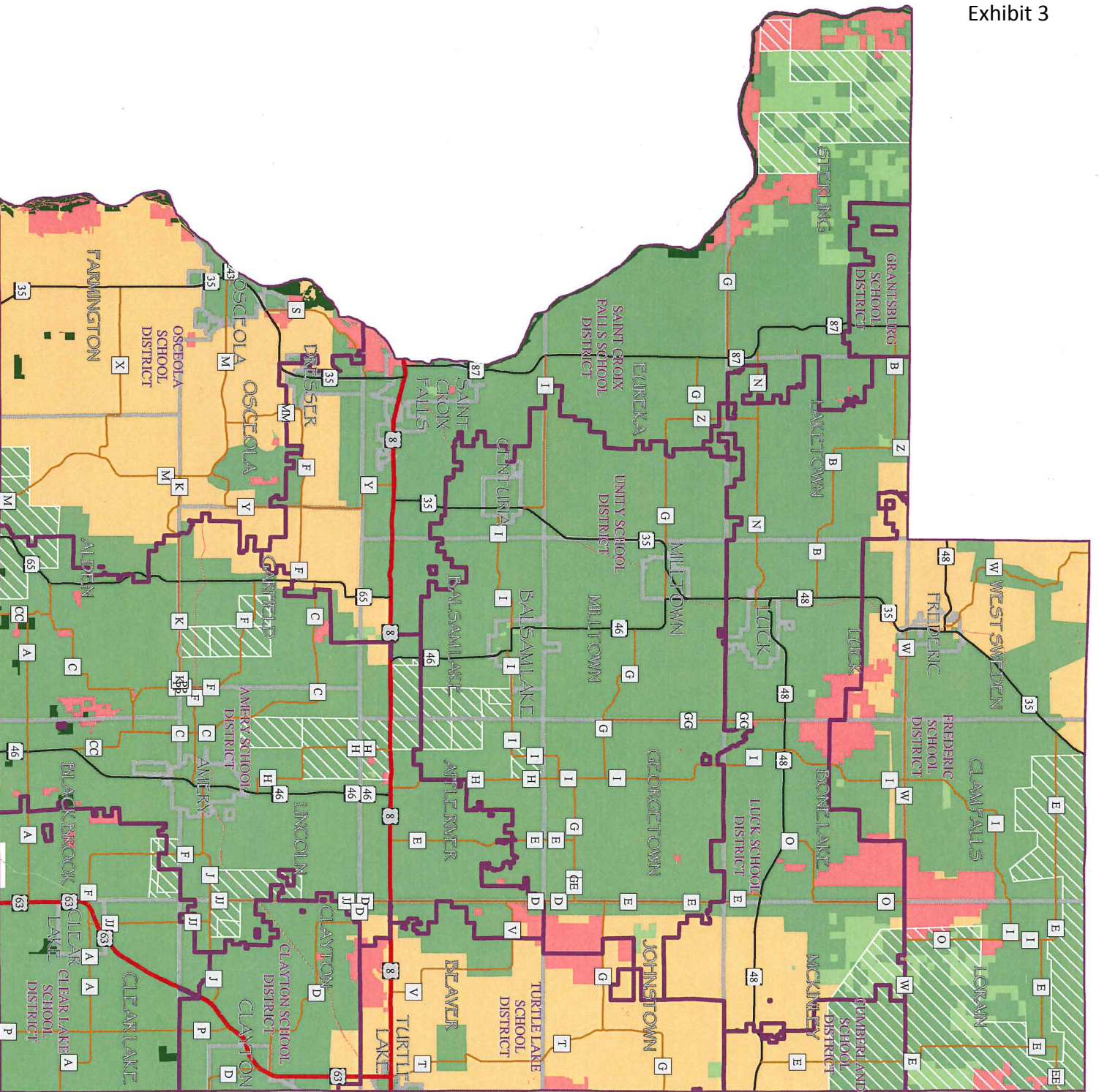
In addition, Polk County recently contracted with an outside consultant to identify areas in the county that lack sufficient internet service. The area targeted in Johnstown Township application directly addresses one of the areas and will satisfy the needs of students in the Turtle Lake school districts as well as numerous businesses and households.

It is our belief that teaming up with our local internet providers and the PSC, we can cover Polk County from border to border with fiber optic cable and set us on a road to better communication, learning, healthcare, and business. Two Healthcare Hospitals in Osceola and St. Croix Falls has informed Polk County of their dire needs to have better broadband in these areas to attract healthcare workers and facilitate telemedicine. Lakeland Communications Group, LLC has already made a substantial investment in Polk County's broadband availability and the County supports their request for this grant. The extension of their internet service to this area would greatly benefit both the local residents and the entire county.

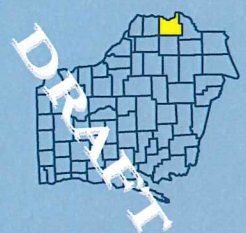
Thank you for your consideration!

Vince Netherland
Polk County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vince Netherland".

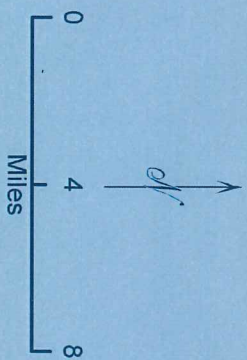


Polk County Broadband Snapshot with School Districts



Due to various reasons, mapping is not exact.
Please contact internet providers to verify
availability at a specific location.

- Legend**
- US Highway
 - Slate Highway
 - County Road
 - City/Village/Town Boundary
 - School District Boundary
 - Polk County Land
 - Slate Land
 - Federal Land
 - Broadband Availability**
 - Underserved
 - Adequate/Excellent
 - Area In Process



Produced by:
Polk County Land Information Office
100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 130
Balsam Lake, WI 54810
(715) 485-9279
www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo

This drawing is the result of a compilation and reproduction of land records as they appear in various Polk County Offices. The drawing should be used for reference purposes only. Polk County is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



March 10, 2022

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR LAKELAND COMMUNICATION TO EXPAND BROADBAND SERVICE AND ACCESS THROUGHOUT POLK COUNTY, WI

Grant Review Committee:

The Polk County Economic Development Corporation (PCEDC) strongly supports Lakeland Communications desire to expand and increase broadband access throughout Polk County. Lakeland Communications has made great strides in expanding broadband access to both residential and commercial stakeholders over many years in Polk County.

The PCEDC has a mission to promote economic growth and vitality countywide. In collaboration with Lakeland Communications to-date, they have proven to be a responsive, reliable and collegial partner to provide the critically important broadband service required in today's marketplace and educational learning environments. Access and availability of broadband internet service has become essential for education, healthcare, commerce, agriculture, small business formation and business activity of all types.

Lakeland Communications has made substantial investment in Polk County's broadband availability and has demonstrated cooperation with local citizens, businesses and organizations. They are a valued member of our county and we support their request for grant participation and awards. The extension of their service to under-served areas throughout our county would be a great benefit.

This is a very important opportunity to make a difference for the 45,648 residents and 1,902 businesses that call Polk County home. Lakeland is a well-respected local company with a proven track-record of being capable and worthy of the job.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Hauer", is positioned above the typed name.

Terry Hauer, Executive Director
Polk County Economic Development Corporation
100 Polk Plaza, Suite 226, Balsam Lake, WI 54810
director@polkcountyedc.com
715-405-3400



Hospital and Clinics
 235 State Street, St. Croix Falls, WI 54024
 715-483-3261
www.scrmc.org

March 3, 2022

Dear Wisconsin PSC Grant Reviewer:

This letter is to express my support for community broadband expansion in Polk County.

As a health care provider the lack of community broadband has had a negative impact to patient care and the overall health of our communities we serve during the pandemic. The inability to provide key services remotely like telehealth visits and digital monitoring creates a void in care for those who are in need. We have treated many patients who have delayed their care and when they finally presented, had significantly more complex health issues.

Beyond the pandemic, health care delivery will become even more dependent on quality broadband. Technology is driving significant change in how care will be provided in the future.

Community broadband also attracts future development and new families who want to live in rural America. It will help our organization recruit health care professionals who are increasingly savvy from a technology perspective. They expect quality internet service from their home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Dave Dobosenski

President | CEO

Direct: 715-483-0549 · Fax: 715-483-0295

800-828-3627 ext. 2549

dave.dobosenski@scrmc.org

CLINICS Toll Free 800-828-3627

St. Croix Falls Clinic
 216 South Adams Street
 St. Croix Falls, WI 54024
 715-483-3221

Frederic Clinic
 205 Oak Street West
 Frederic, WI 54837
 715-327-5700

Unity Clinic
 1504 190th Avenue
 Balsam Lake, WI 54810
 715-825-3278

Webster Health Center
 26425 Lakeland Avenue S.
 Webster, WI 54893
 715-866-4271

Lindstrom Clinic
 12375 Lindstrom Lane
 Lindstrom, MN 55045
 651-400-2240



Date: 03/10/2022

Dear Wisconsin PSC Grant Reviewer:

I'm writing in support for Lakeland Communications and for community broadband expansion in Polk County.

Working in the healthcare field has always been challenging but even more so during the past couple of years during the pandemic. Living in a rural area, it has been challenging to maintain the level of care we were accustomed to with in-person visits. Polk County and surrounding areas have very limited options when it comes to "high speed" internet with the only option being CenturyLink with speeds of 3-8 Mbps. Telehealth and video visits are next to impossible at those speeds and can prove unproductive as the quality of service just isn't available.

Putting patients first has been a long standing priority for Osceola Medical Center and its care teams and telehealth as well as remote monitoring are where healthcare is heading. Businesses and residents of rural areas are at a significant disadvantage of receiving the best possible care by not having access to high speed dependable internet services.

Expansion of broadband services are vital to our small communities' development and growth. In a world that is driven by data at your fingertips, everyone should have the ability to receive quality internet services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse Wulf", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jesse Wulf
Information Services
Osceola Medical Center
jesse.wulf@myomc.org





DAVE ARMSTRONG

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 75TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

March 2, 2022

Chairperson Rebecca Valcq
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Chairperson Valcq,

I am pleased to support Lakeland Communications' broadband expansion grant application to expand service to underserved areas in Polk County, specifically the Town of Johnstown. This project will improve access for over 240 locations.

As Representative of the 75th Assembly District, which includes Johnstown, I appreciate Lakeland's commitment to expand broadband service to an underserved portion of the county. Broadband is important for both residents and businesses, and Lakeland's proposal provides opportunities to these groups. As seen in the past two years, internet access is an increasing necessity for obtaining education and medical services, as well as promoting economic growth, particularly in rural areas. Enhanced broadband will open up possibilities in an economically challenged area.

Once barriers to broadband expansion are removed, Polk County will improve its position as a destination for startups, expanding and relocating businesses, and telecommuters and working families relocating here. Polk County's proximity to Minneapolis-St. Paul provides huge potential markets. New business begets skilled workers, increased home values, and increased tax base; new families expand and revitalize our workforce. The investment by Lakeland and the State of Wisconsin through broadband expansion grants will be of significant economic benefit to the residents and businesses of Polk County.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at (608) 266-2519 at Rep.Armstrong@legis.wi.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Armstrong". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "D" and a cursive "Armstrong".

Dave Armstrong
State Representative
75th Assembly District



President
TIM KUSILEK
President Elect
JUSTIN HUEBNER
Executive Director
BILL ESBECK

March 9, 2022

Chairperson Rebecca Valcq
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower - 6th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

Chairperson Valcq,

I am pleased to support the FY2022 Broadband Expansion Grant Program application of Lakeland Communications for expanded broadband service in the Polk County Township of Johnstown.

Lakeland Communications traces its roots back more than 100 years, with the founding of the Milltown Mutual Telephone Company and Luck Telephone Company. Both companies were founded in 1908.

In more recent years, Lakeland has distinguished itself as a provider of cutting-edge broadband products and services. Lakeland has received national recognition from NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association as both a Smart Rural Community and a Certified Gig-Capable Provider. The Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association (WSTA) also recognized Lakeland with the WSTA Gigabit Community Award.

Working closely with their local partners, Lakeland's expanded service help improve broadband opportunities for economic development, education, telecommuting and other broadband applications. With the proposed 55 miles of fiber, 330 locations in Johnstown will have fiber-to-the-premise broadband connections. The targeted locations will have broadband speeds available of up to 1 Gbps for residential and up to 10 Gbps for business.

Lakeland will contribute \$1,088,266 in matching funds toward the project, which is more than 49% of the total cost. Significantly, both Johnstown and Polk County are contributing matching funds. Johnstown will contribute \$16,862 and Polk County will contribute \$200,000.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this application. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can assist with additional information.

Regards,

Bill Esbeck

BROADBAND FORWARD!

COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

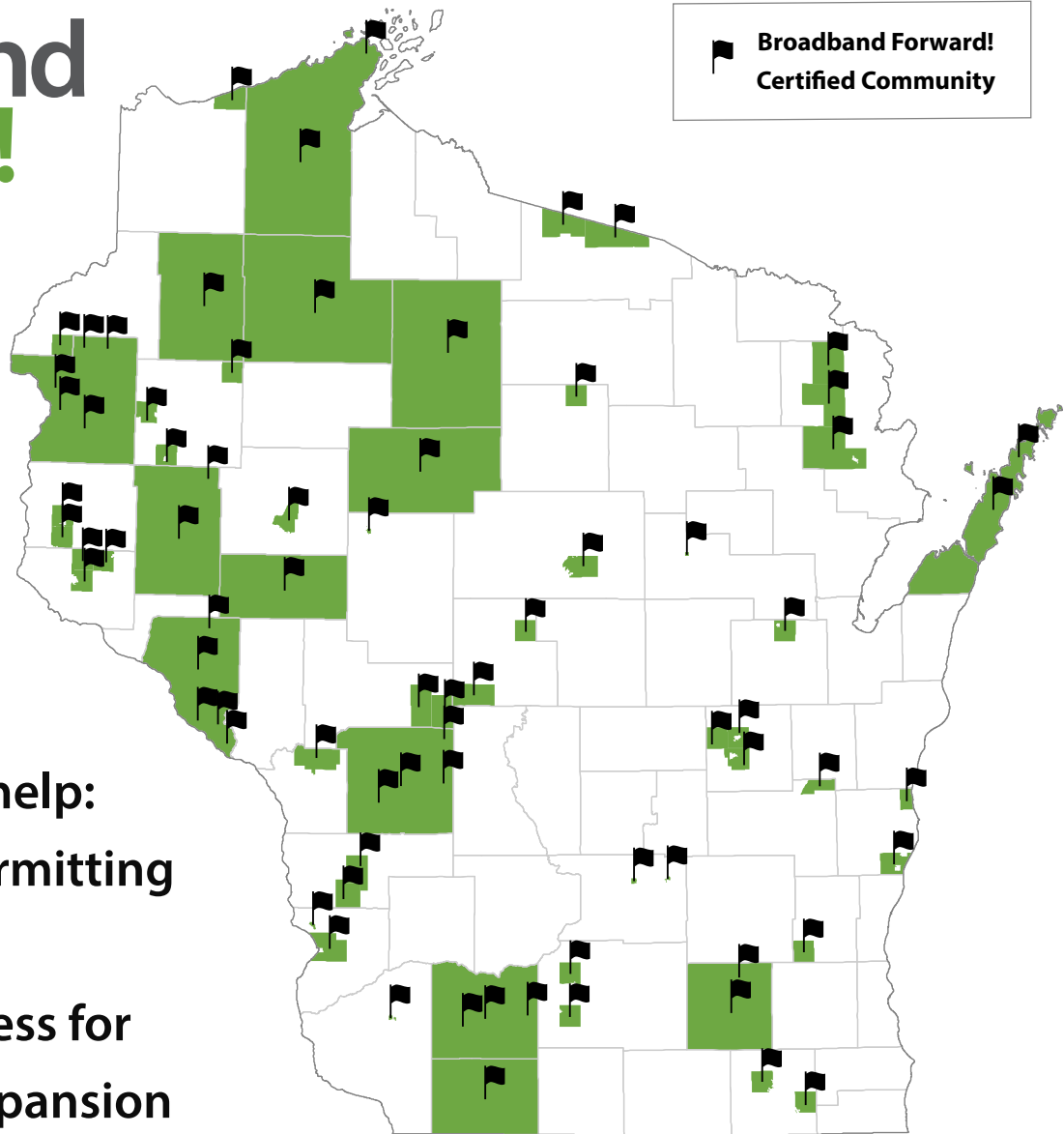
Presented by the Wisconsin Broadband Office



Take the first steps in reducing obstacles to broadband investment

Certification can help:

- ✔ Streamline permitting process
- ✔ Signal eagerness for broadband expansion



CERTIFY YOUR COMMUNITY

TO GET STARTED VISIT:

<https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandForward.aspx>



TELECOMMUTER FORWARD! COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

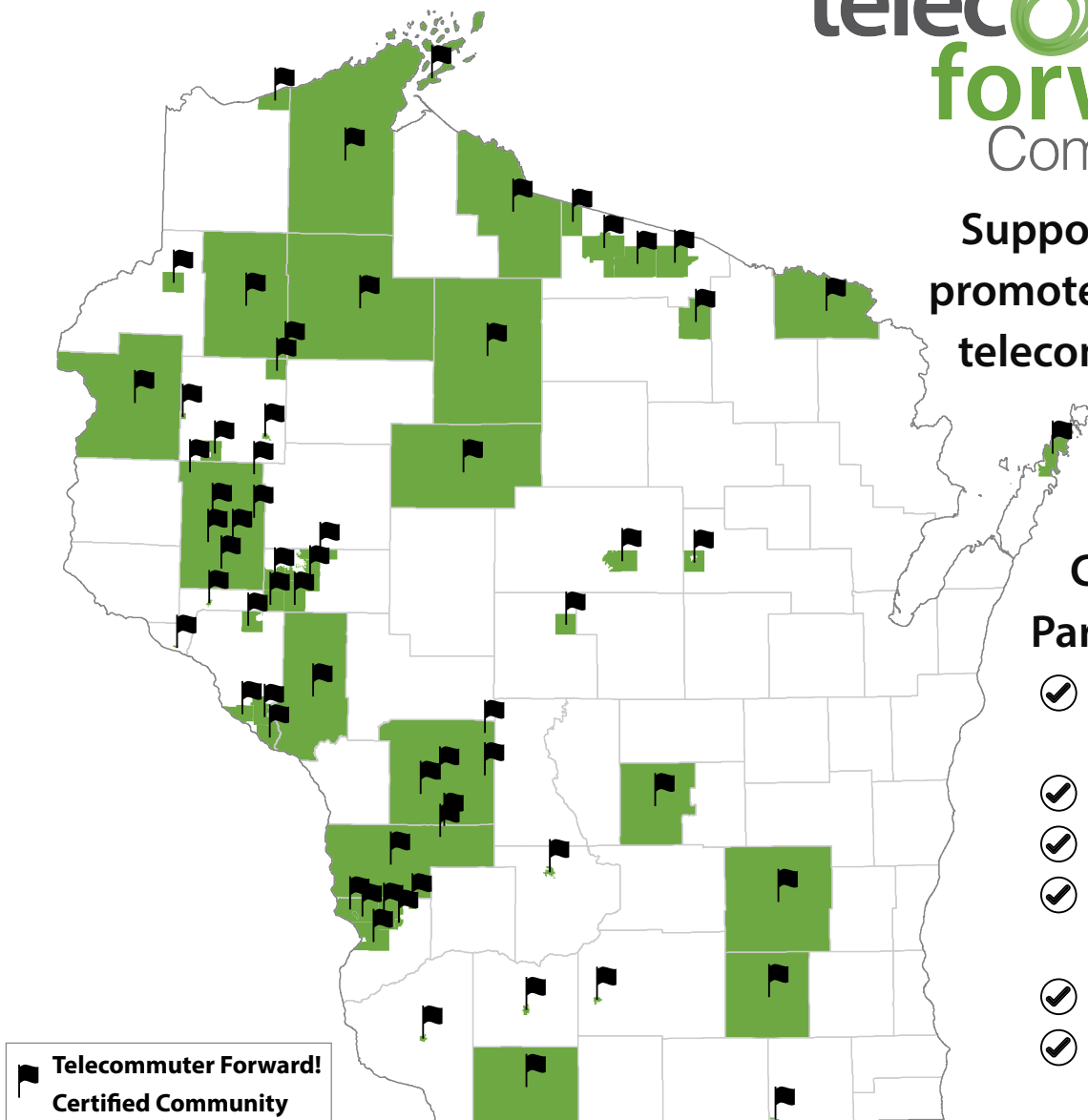
Presented by the Wisconsin Broadband Office

**telecommuter
forward!**
Community

Support and commit to
promote the availability of
telecommuting options

Coordination and Partnership Between:

- ✓ Wisconsin Broadband Office
- ✓ Broadband providers
- ✓ Realtors
- ✓ Economic development professionals
- ✓ Employers + employees
- ✓ Other telecommuting stakeholders



CERTIFY YOUR COMMUNITY

TO GET STARTED VISIT:

<https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/TelecommuterForward.aspx>

Wisconsin
Broadband Office

PSC
of WISCONSIN